

## Foreign Policy Narratives and Narrative Analysis

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Policymaking is about storytelling. It is about telling convincing stories about the collective self—the state—and how the self does and should relate to the world around it. In that spirit, this workshop invites scholars who study foreign policy *as* narrative or *through* narrative to come together and think through the narrative basis of world politics: of war, of peace, and of doomedness.

Although there have always been interpretations of foreign policy making that were more or less explicitly based in narrative, narrative approaches gained traction in the 2000s. This trend has been prevalent in more generally *interpretivist* approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) but is also visible in accounts that study *emotions* and *memory* in relation to foreign policy as well as in *critical* and *feminist* approaches to foreign policy making and foreign policy experiencing. Despite their particularities and differences, what all narrative approaches have in common is that they treat discourse and narrative, rather than as mere rhetoric, as fundamental to collective sense- and decision-making and, therewith, as fundamental to world politics, cooperation, and conflict. With a war raging on the European continent, public mobilization against the religious-patriarchal authoritarian regime in Iran, failing climate politics, and a liberal international order in decline, the question of how countries narrate and understand their individual and joined histories, traumas, memories, relations, identities, emotions, and futures is ever more prevalent to study.

The aim of this workshop is to further narrative-based approaches by constructively contrasting and comparing understandings and emphases. To serve that aim, we encourage applications that take a more abstract theoretical or methodological approach and address why we should study narratives or how we can study narratives, as well as contributions that offer more practical and empirical explorations of (a) particular foreign policy narrative(s). The workshop will explore the possibility of an edited volume or special issue based on the contributions. Possible foci of contributions would be:

- *Theoretical*: What are the strengths and weaknesses of a narrative approach? What does it afford? How does it differ from discourse analysis? How does narrative allow us to study meanings, relations, emotions, memory, trauma, and so forth?
- *Methodological*: How to conduct a narrative analysis? Which tools and concepts do we have? How can we understand narrative ontologically and epistemologically? Do narratives *cause* foreign policy outcomes?
- *Practical*: Explorations and case studies of actual foreign policy narratives and their outcomes and implications for world politics.